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A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD VISCOUNT MELBOURNE,

ON THE

IDOLATRY AND APOSTASY

OF THE

CHURCH OF ROME.

IN PROOF THAT

THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME ARE NOT
FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME WITH THOSE OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

SALISBURY:

J. HEARN, JUN., MARKET PLACE;

AND

MESSRS. RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON.

1835.

479.



ties, which it frequently brought upon them, till they were finally punished for it by the total overthrow of their nation, and their captivity in Babylon. The most enlightened people of pagan antiquity were worshippers of one supreme God at the time that they had many subordinate Deities, national, domestic, and local, like the deified Angels and Saints of modern Rome.

For an exact parallel between Pagan and Papal Idolatry, I may refer your Lordship not only to Dr. Middleton's celebrated Letter from Rome, but to the Author of a Tract, entitled, "A True and lively Representation of Popery, shewing, that Popery is new-modelled Paganism, and perfectly destructive of the great ends and purposes of God in the Gospel," published in London in 1679, a period, when the *increase* of Popery extorted from the Legislature a remedy,* which we have lived to see *repealed*, to the *great increase* and encouragement of Popery—a remedy, the wisdom and expediency of which nothing was wanting to prove, but *its loss*, (what, if it

* 30 Car. 11. A. D. 1678, repealed 1829.

may be but a temporary loss ?)* and the renewed and dear-bought experience which has followed this repeal.

Your Lordship objects to that part of the Petition of the Protestant Prelates of Ireland, which appeared to you to be couched in injurious, uncharitable and unchristian language towards the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland. “The words *usurpation, idolatry, and blind superstition,*” (you observe) “are not terms of conciliation, nor were they fit language for a bench of “right reverend Prelates.” The language is justified by the example of the many great authorities before mentioned, from Bishop Jewell down to Archbishop Usher, who have proved the Church of Rome to be usurping, idolatrous, and superstitious. The words are not terms of conciliation ; but they are the language of truth, of history, and (as before

* On the last evening's debate on the Popery Bill of 1829, an assurance was given on very high authority that if the Bill should not answer the salutary purposes for which it was intended, *other measures* must be resorted to. With the papal threat of repealing THE UNION may be contrasted the Protestant wish for repealing the POPERY BILL—and the undecided query: Is not one of the two inevitable?

mentioned) of Parliamentary authority. What other term indeed than *usurpation* can be given to the assumption of universal dominion over the Church of Christ, which the Pope and the Church of Rome have employed to the degradation of Sovereigns, the interdict of Kingdoms, and the massacre of Provinces? What other terms can with truth be applied to the bowing down in prayer before the images of Saints, and to the adoration of Christ under the visible forms of bread and wine, than those, which are employed by our Church and Parliament, and constitutionally adopted by your Lordship?

Your Lordship laments the great errors of the Church of Rome; and you scruple not to deprecate the spirit of some of her doctrines. But experience has abundantly shewn, that those errors are not to be reformed, nor her doctrines mitigated, by conciliation and concession. To call idolatry, superstition, and apostasy by any other terms than by their own appropriate appellations, is not to conciliate the Church, that is guilty of such corruptions, but to confirm her members in their errors, and to mislead uninformed

Protestants. The Prophet's denunciation is true in respect of religion above all other subjects :
 " Woe unto them that call evil good, and good
 " evil, that put darkness for light, and light for
 " darkness."

The disuse of the old Parliamentary terms, Popery, Papistry, and Papists, and the common use of the term Catholic instead of Popish,—of Catholicism instead of Popery,—of *real presence* instead of Transubstantiation,—cannot fail to confound the understandings of uninformed and unthinking Protestants, and to propagate pernicious errors. The Church of Rome is falsely called *Catholic*, and most inconsistently denominated *Roman Catholic*. It never was the Catholic or universal Church of Christ, either in authority or doctrine :—not in authority ; for it never had dominion over the Eastern Church, nor over the whole Western Church, for the first ten centuries, nor after the beginning of the sixteenth.

Nor can a Church be Catholic in doctrine, which has added to the generally received Faith of Christians, sundry articles of belief as necessary to salvation, which are mere " novelties and

heterodoxies," as they are called by BARROW at the close of his never-answered, and unanswerable Treatise on the Pope's supremacy. The boasted term *Catholic*, as applied to the Church, is a novelty unknown to the Scriptures, and to the Primitive Church of Rome, and though used by the Greek Church in the fourth century, was not admitted into the Roman Creed till after the fifth or sixth century. The Papal Church therefore has not the claim of antiquity for the term *Catholic*, nor even the authority of the Trent Creed for the *mode* in which it is applied. For in that Creed the Church of Rome is called *Catholic Roman*, and not *Roman Catholic*. But whether entitled Catholic Roman, or Roman Catholic, nothing can excuse the incongruity of combining in one appellation two contradictory terms, *universal* and *particular*, so as to call it either an universal particular, or particular universal Church.*

Your Lordship condemns in harsh terms the employment of Protestant missionaries in Ireland,

"And whereas the Papist boasts himself to be a Roman Catholic, it is a mere contradiction; as if he should say, universal particular, or Catholic schismatic."—MILTON'S Tracts on True Religion.

as if it was placing the Irish population on a level with the worshippers of Juggernaut. Your Lordship is evidently not aware of the state of Popery in Ireland, or of the extent of that blind superstition and idolatry which is stated in the Petition of the Protestant Prelates of Ireland ; or of the details which have been given of it in various publications from the time of the Reformation to the present. Of its present state, I can refer your Lordship to a very recent account in a Tract entitled *Popery in alliance with Paganism*, by JOHN POYNTER, Esq., especially in Letters xii. and xiii. concerning the *Water Idolatry* in Ireland. Of a former period the following is by the BISHOP of DOWN in 1686,—the learned, the pious, the excellent JEREMY TAYLOR, in the Preface to his *Dissuasive from Popery* :

“ We have observed amongst the generality of the
 “ Irish such a declension of Christianity, so
 “ great credulity to believe every superstitious
 “ story,—so little sense of true religion and the
 “ fear of God, so much care to obey the Priests,
 “ and so little to obey God,—thinking themselves
 “ more bound to swear on the Mass-book than